

Musical Treasure Chest #17

One of my particular pleasures is to go for walks in the early evening. I leave shortly before sunset and walk west so I can be dazzled by the beauty of the waning sun, and then I continue as the light fades away. I call these dusky excursions my gloaming walks, and they are something I look forward to each day. This special time of night is both mysterious and etched and hushed and amplified; all perspectives seem altered, and houses that are modest in the daytime become looming mansions. As I walk I get a glimpse into each house, in a way one doesn't in the daylight, and there is something oddly reassuring about it. Perhaps it's an ancient, almost instinctive response, a feeling of community at the end of the day. What millennia ago would have been a time to sit around the fire with your clans people before falling asleep is replaced now by the ubiquitous flickering blue light of technology, but somehow it still conveys a sense of emotional well-being and serenity.

My mind often turns to music on these jaunts, providing a soundtrack to my steps. Sometimes the music is a piece I am practicing, and the score can get "stuck" on a particular phrase, which can be a bit annoying. Other times musical memories from years earlier pop up and whole symphonies will accompany the entire walk. This was the case last night as I viewed a particularly magnificent sunset. The colors were stunning and lasted forever, and the light seemed to glow on for an impossibly long time. The air was still hot, even after darkness arrived, and the sound of insects was incredibly and wonderfully loud.

I was "accompanied" by two pieces last night: [Haydn's Clock Symphony](#) and [Schubert's 5th Symphony](#). These are both works that I discovered as a teenager and that I adore. The Clock Symphony was on an old LP recording of my parents whose flip side was the Mozart Haffner Symphony. I listened to it so much that to this day I hear every entrance of every instrument, and that performance (Toscanini and the New York Philharmonic) is burned into my head. I cannot find the exact recording, it's been repackaged now with Beethoven, but here is a link to the Haydn. It's a brilliant performance with great

energy and superb pacing and will be forever how I "hear" this fantastic symphony. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgsem9GC31M>

The Schubert I discovered through my high school years Columbia Record House membership. I had ordered Mendelssohn's Reformation Symphony to prepare for an Area All-State I was playing for (I mentioned it in an earlier Musical Treasure Chest). When I flipped the LP over there was the Schubert, and it was love at first listen. (My brother used to get really annoyed with me for blasting my music all the time!) I have found the recording, once again with NY Philharmonic, this time with Leonard Bernstein. The playing is just marvelous, exciting to hear, and Bernstein imbues the score with great joy. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VcmYnoUs6g>